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LETTER DATED 9 NOVEMBER 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ETHIOPIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit to you a statement issued on 9 November 1998 by the Office of the Spokesperson of the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia concerning the Organization of African Unity (OAU) peace proposal on the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, adopted by the OAU Committee of Heads of State and Government at its meeting held at Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, on 7 and 8 November 1998 (see annex).

I would also like to point out that Ethiopia has accepted the above-mentioned peace proposal since it is based on the principles of OAU and the decision adopted by the thirty-fourth Summit of the Organization, held at Ouagadougou, in June 1998.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Duri MOHAMMED
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

Statement on the Organization of African Unity peace proposal peace proposal on the Ethiopian/Eritrean conflict, issued by the Spokesperson of the Government of Ethiopia on 9 November 1998

A committee of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) which met this weekend in Ouagadougou presented a peace proposal to both Ethiopia and Eritrea. The proposal was consistent with the previous OAU resolution which stated that Eritrea should withdraw from Badme and its environs to positions held before 12 May and that the Ethiopian civilian administration should return.

Points of clarification were raised by the Ethiopian delegation, which was led by Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. Clarification was sought, as it was important that all points be stated clearly, especially when taking into consideration the Eritrean Government's tendency to be selective about facts that emerge from such meetings. Having considered the proposal and the satisfactory clarification of the points raised, Ethiopia fully accepted the proposed OAU plan.

In contrast, Eritrea rejected the proposed plan, stating again that any withdrawal could never be accepted.

This contemptuous response reflected President Isaias Afwerki's previous statement: "We have always been there [Badme] and we are there to stay" and "an Eritrean withdrawal from Badme is unthinkable - it is like assuming that the sun would never rise".

Eritrea's continued rejection of a peaceful solution is in keeping with its past contempt for its neighbours, its previous dismissal of OAU efforts, its blatant disregard for international law and for international bodies whose views it has so pointedly rejected.